

3 STEPS FOR TURNING

PRICE SHOPPERS
INTO CASH CUSTOMERS



WITHOUT
LOWERING
YOUR RATES

DON ARCHER

The Set-Up

The phone rings and the guy on the other end asks “How much is your guy’s towing?”

You roll your eyes and contain a sigh. You’ve heard it a thousand times before. He’s looking for the lowest rate for getting his car towed. (Of course the reality is most people only *think* they’re looking for the lowest rate.) But you know his type, and if you try to reason with him he’ll ignore you. If you just spit out your rate he’ll say “thanks”, hang up, and call one of the other guys who said they’d do it for less.

He’s still on the line...waiting for your answer and you begin to sweat. You start thinking about all the wasted advertising money you’ve spent. You’re in the yellow pages, you’re online, and you even spent time schmoozing with the repair shops. You’re about to speak but then you look through your office window out into the shop. There’s 3 of your guys milling around, waiting for a call. And then your blood starts to boil as you think about the guy down the street. Yeah you know the one...drives that rat infested 1979 Ford with the rusted-out Holmes bed. He’d tow anything anywhere for \$25 bucks.

You grind your teeth as you hold back a scream; “Twenty-Five?...Freaking Dollars????”

How can you win?

Calm down, calm down...

The first thing you should do is stop worrying about what the other guys are doing. You know that they’re only ushering-in their own undoing with those kind of rates. Before long they will be long gone and someone new, *with a goal of running the game at \$20 a pop*, will take their place.

Remember...you don’t want any part of *their*...**Race To The Bottom.**

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bottom

Besides you’ve got bigger fish to fry. You need to enhance your calm and do as they say...“Rise above the fray.” And to do that you’ve got to Control the Conversation.

Step 1: Control The Conversation

1. **Control the conversation.** Do not provide a price-shopper with your rate...right away.

Don't just blurt out your rate, hoping to "Hit It Big" in the low-price lottery. Think about it, if you just say "\$50" then you're allowing a potential customer to stand you up against a wall next to all your competitors, kind of like a police line-up, and make a decision based on only one facet of your business—**Price**.

Aren't you much more than that?

So the first step to transforming Price-shoppers into Cash-customers is controlling the conversation. Don't allow him to paint you into a corner and base your value on one factor only, price. You need to use more than just words to help him understand that the service you provide is greatly underpriced and that the value he'll receive is much greater than the low-ball competition.

But understand this; no matter how good you think you are, constructive coercion will never be successful in turning price-shoppers into a customers. Your superhuman feats of persuasion could supplant his negative stereotypical thoughts with good feelings. You could be the best salesman in the world, selling ice water to Eskimos, but you're still must contend with his desire for the lowest price. That doesn't mean you shouldn't try.

Of course you should try. You want to be like a **Baptist Preacher at a Soup Kitchen**.

What you don't know what I'm talking about?

I thought everyone's heard that one.

Ok I'll explain myself.

The way I heard it is...

An alcoholic wants food but has no money. So he heads down to the local Samaritan Center, you know...soup kitchen. With his hat in hand he appeals to the kindness of the Preacher who's running the place.

The drunk looks the preacher in the eye and says, "I aint et in 3 days".

The preacher puts his arm around the drunk's shoulder and pulls him near. And as they walk together the drunk can't wait to have a good meal. His stomach starts growling and his mouth begins to water in anticipation. But the Preacher doesn't immediately hand him a plate of food.

No. They walk right past the kitchen and out into the hall. They then go through the open doors of an adjacent room. Inside that room there others waiting for the Preacher to arrive. The drunk is welcomed in, ushered to take a seat and given a hymnal.

**Be Like A Baptist
Preacher At A Soup
Kitchen**

You see before he's allowed to eat, the good Preacher insists on "treating" the hungry laggard to a lengthy sermon. He justifies his actions by insisting that—"the soup kitchen can only nourish the body but the sermon replenishes the soul."

In the Preacher's estimation, he would be doing the drunk a disservice if he were to feed him first.

That's the way you should feel when talking to Price-Shoppers. They want your rates immediately. They don't want to know how you're different than all the rest. But to get their business—You need to tell them.

So to distinguish yourself from the low-ball competition you want to be like a Baptist Preacher. Place your arm around your caller's shoulder (metaphorically speaking). Don't make it obvious that you require him to endure a sales pitch before being given what he wants. He'll bolt if you do. So tease him a little. Use a little allusion to the necessity of having the proper information before providing him with an accurate price for services.

Controlling the conversation keeps you in the driver's seat and allows you to slowly divert the conversation away from price and toward service.

Of course there are some folks who are just considering their options. "Should I get a tow truck or ask my cousin Larry to bring his Dodge and tow rope over to pull me home?" But I don't really consider these to be Price-shoppers. Most likely this person will not be swayed by a difference of \$5 or \$10 dollars.

But still this type doesn't care that you're trying to make a living. They are in cost-avoidance mode right now and it will not make a lick of difference if you explain in detail that the price for services is completely within reason, given your expenses. If you attempt to reason with them in terms of time. And explain that they could move the car on their own, but it would take 3 times the amount of time and require a considerable effort on their part, you'll most likely get nowhere. It's like beating your head up against a wall. Because your reasoning won't sound like reasoning. To them it will sound—more like an argument. You're trying to get in their pocket and they couldn't care less about all your practiced lines about why your prices are reasonable.

Not. For both of these types of customer... what you need to do is to come in through the back door. Throw reason out the window and appeal to their selfish desires.

But how do you do this without compromising on price? I had that question too but what I found out was that while price was their stated reason for wanting the lowest rate the reality was something quite different.

Mark Twain said something like; "Men buy things for 2 reasons, the real reason and the reasons they tell their wives."

Granted... purchasing towing services is quite different than showing up with a brand-new Mercedes. But there are some similarities.

A Mercedes is expensive, but once purchased and taken home, the purchaser will avoid talking about the price. No. Instead, when reasoning with his wife, the smart man talks about the safety that it provides. “This may be a highly rated luxury vehicle but it’s renowned for how likely its passengers are able to walk away from a crash.” Memorized from his mini-course on the sales floor, he’ll recite every line as he justifies his purchase: “A Mercedes is a precision piece of automotive brilliance.”— “With higher intervals between maintenance needs you’ll see the repair shop less frequently” And. “Mercedes have fewer problems than any other car on the market.”

**Men Buy Things For 2
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You may be asking how I can compare a high performance machine like the Mercedes Benz to towing services. And also how I could possibly convince a price-shopping, penny pinching, caller—looking for the lowest rate—that his car would be better off behind one of my well-maintained, insured and compliant wreckers,—rather than being dragged behind a rattle-trap law-dodger?

I cannot and will not. That’s not what this is all about.

Remember you’re not trying to convince anyone of anything. In fact you’re going to take yourself completely out of the conversation. Remember the Mercedes buyer made a decision to buy based on his emotional desire for the car. And only after that decision was made did he use reason to justify his purchase. You see you can’t get someone to buy until they’ve convinced themselves that they desire a thing. And while most people think that what they’re looking for is the lowest price, especially when purchasing something they consider to be a commodity, they’re really making a decision based on something else. And most of the time the person trying to get the sale has no input whatsoever on that decision making factor. No matter how good you think you are certain factors outside your control can have an effect on a buyer’s decision.

**You Cannot Get
Someone To Buy Until
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Themselves That They
Desire A Thing**

For example: Say you’re driving down the road and your car starts to spit and sputter. You barely make it to the shoulder not knowing what’s going on. You then begin to go down a mental checklist of what could be wrong with your car. Then it hits you...the last place you bought gas was that junky little station down-town. ...The one with the 100 year old pumps and the old lady with 1 tooth. Well whether or not the reason for your car problems was due to bad gas, you will forever remember that day and what happened—and most likely never return to that station.

But as a tow truck service salesman, (and that’s exactly what you are so embrace it), you don’t have the time or the ability to reach into the brains of the guy or girl on the other end of the

phone. You don't have the power to diagnose their real reasons for making decisions. And again you don't want to go about convincing the caller that you're the best or that they'll be making a big mistake if they choose a low-baller. That's the quickest way to ensure you don't get the sale.

So what do you do? It seems you're left with no ammunition. All your fail-safes are gone. If you talk about the fact that low-ballers don't carry the proper insurance your caller won't care. If you attempt to convince them that there's a chance that the driver may be inexperienced they'll ignore you. And if you were a betting man you might believe that there's nothing that could convince a price-shopper to consider anything other than price. But you'd lose that bet.

You see if you take the route of attempting to sway a price-shopper by appealing to their logical brain you might as well just hang up the phone. They already know all the lines, insurance, quality work, possible damage to their vehicle, and none of that stuff motivates them. In fact when you bring it up it's like a slap in their face, like you're accusing them of not thinking about all that stuff. And that won't get you the sale.

So instead of appealing to all the reasons why they should do a thing, appeal to their emotions. That where they decide.

Step 2: Appeal To Their Emotional Side

2. **Appeal to their emotional side.** So instead of appealing to their logical brain, the part of the brain that's used to justify a purchase that's already been made, you need to appeal to their emotions. Remember the Mercedes purchaser? His emotional desire for the thing made the sale.

I hear you out there. You're wondering where I'm going with this. You're probably saying, "What's emotional about the towing business?"

Stop just a minute and consider this. The towing business itself isn't filled with emotion. I know *we* get excited about our trucks, and we aren't very happy when things don't go right but customers don't care about all that. They only care about themselves and the situations that arise that require your services. Don't you think those situations could bring to mind emotion?

Listen, I know you're anxious for business and it's hard, but you must take yourself out of the equation and think objectively to make this work.

Appealing to emotion must be subtle. You can't just come out and say "Man I bet your car problem has really put a crimp in your plans for the day." They'll see right through that. No you want to come in like an undercover hypnotist, you want to plant a seed in their brain. Your goal is to get them to believe that you and they are kindred souls. You're on their side.

You see everybody's playing a role, we're all operating in our own best interest hoping to achieve a desired outcome. The price-shopper is in price-shopper mode, he's looking for the lowest price on towing. You're in customer-getting mode, you want to sell your services at your rates. To get the customer to come out of his trance, you must first come out of yours. What that means is that *you* need to stop being combative.

Now I hear you saying, "But I'm not combative... I just know what I have to get out of each tow. Price-shoppers have unreasonable expectations."

And to that I say, "I know...you're 100% right." They want the fastest service, at the lowest rates and if something goes wrong then you can bet they'll be milking you for all it's worth." But they're still the customer and you want them right?

Ok.

So be on their side. Forget about your needs for a moment and put yourself in their place. If you were stuck roadside and needed to get somewhere you'd be reaching out to anyone who offered assistance right? Well that's what they're doing when they call price-shopping, *they're reaching-out*. So listen to what they say.

**To Get The Customer
To Come Out Of His
Trance *You Must First*
Come out Of Yours**

But be warned, being on their side doesn't require you to be fake, in fact faking it will be a dead give-away. Just be natural and speak as if you were talking to your little brother or sister and were reassuring them that you're going to do everything possible to get them the best deal.

Remember the Preacher? Put your arm around your caller's shoulder and talk to them: "Ok let me know where you are and I'll see what I can do to get you some help." And "What happened exactly?"

And then let them talk while you determine exactly where they are and how many miles you'll need to travel. And before you give any rates ask if there's anything else you can do for them. "Is there anyone in the car that needs special treatment? (wheel chairs, elderly?)"—"Are there any special instructions you need to know about the car?"— And ask about the place where you're taking the car. "Would you like the car placed anywhere in particular?" And... "Are there spots where you don't want it to go? Like in front of another car or the garage?"

Without annoying your customer, ask as many questions as is reasonable. You see when you ask you fill his mind with details he hadn't considered. And this causes you to begin to sound different than all the rest. And it only takes a small degree of differentiation to get them to choose you.

You see many times there's inner turmoil that the caller isn't even aware of. And when you bring up something like where to drop the car it can trigger those thoughts. Maybe he still lives with his parents and the last time his car broke-down it sat on blocks in the driveway for two months. Maybe his Dad gave him a hard time about it. Maybe the City threatened to have it towed. And when you suggest that you can help him with this inner turmoil you'll no longer be a commodity. No now you're a helping hand.

So even if he does hang up and call 3 other places he'll most likely call you back because the other guys only asked questions that were pertinent to *their* needs, not his.

Now that you've controlled the conversation and appealed to his emotion, in essence passively convincing him that you're on his side, you'll then want to close the sale. And with the help of the information he's already provided and a little bit of slight-of-hand you can do this.

Step 3: Create Scarcity While Appealing To His Desire For Speed

3. **Create scarcity while appealing to his desire for speed.** No longer are you an undercover hypnotist. Now you're switching hats to that of a practitioner of magic, bringing to the forefront something the caller has not yet revealed.

So with the deft skill of a master prestidigitator interrupt the conversation and ask the caller to hold just a second. You could say it this way: "Can you hold on just a moment? I think I've got a truck in your area."

Then, while loosely holding your hand over the receiver, lean over and grab the microphone of your two-way radio and call one of your trucks. Ask the tow truck driver's location and then ask that he hold-tight for a moment—because you might have a call for him.

Then go back to the caller and say, "I've got someone close—who's free right now...you want me to send him over?"

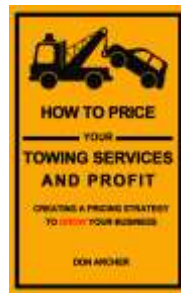
Here again we're dealing with emotions. When you appeal to his sense of urgency while creating scarcity, you're coming at him from an unexpected direction.

Although they're loathe to admit it for fear they'll tip their hand, many price-shoppers are looking for something right-away. And if you have the ability to use time as a little nudge to get them leaning *your way*—then do it. This can have the added benefit of stopping him from continuing to call other companies. Because once you've magically created the picture in his mind that your truck's **just around the corner**, he starts to put 2 and 2 together and thinks that your truck might not be as readily available after he's called around.

Most callers, if they truly need a tow at that time, will say "Yeah, go ahead and come on out." Of course there are some who don't need it right away and this strategy won't work but if you feel them slipping away it's worth a shot.

Well there you have it a full-proof plan to transform Price-shoppers into Cash-Customers. Of course it's not going to work every time, you're dealing with people whose brains have become calloused-over from the thousands of marketing messages that are drilled into them daily. But even if you're not immediately successful, using these steps will help you to become more attuned to your caller's wants, needs, and desires rather than yours and the result will be that you both come out ahead.

For more tips and help with your towing business or if you're interested in learning how to get started—head on over to [The Tow Academy](#)



Or checkout our books